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ABSTRACT

Project "Freestyle" involved the development of prototypical television and print materials intended to combat sex-role stereotyping in career-related attitudes of nine to twelve-year-old children. This paper summarizes the results of the field evaluation of three pilot programs. With the aid of graphs, it reports the results in the following areas: comparison of three pilot programs in terms of children's liking of them, factual comprehension, and comprehension of material that reflected the series objectives; comparison of reactions of children who had access to both television and print materials and those who had only the television materials; comparison of student reactions to realistic and cartoon versions of a supplementary comic book; comprehension scores reflecting students' ability to identify the objectives in the television pilots; and teacher and administrator reactions to the use of the materials. For each topic, recommendations are made based on the findings. (GW)

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NATIONAL SITES RESULTS

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INTRODUCTION

This is a summary of the results of the field evaluation of prototype television and print materials developed for project FREESTYLE, an educational package intended to combat sex-role stereotyping by 9 to 12-year-old children in career-related knowledge, attitudes and behavior. The project also includes problems of the interaction of ethnic and sex-role stereotyping.

RESULTS

Television Format

Figure 1 summarizes the comparison of the three pilots. These overall reactions had substantial generality across sites, sex age, and ethnicity; thus primary interpretations can be based on this figure.

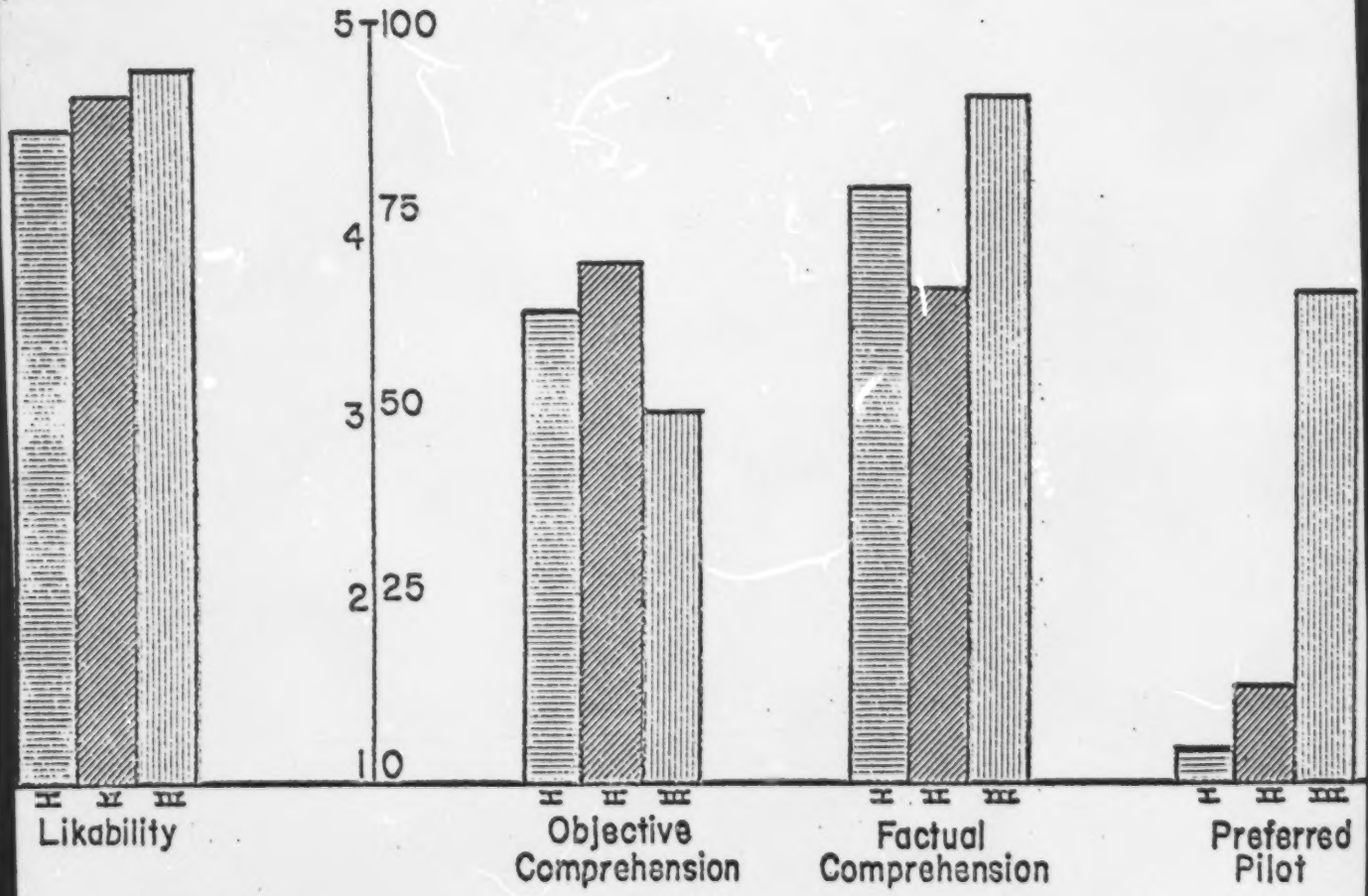
All three pilots rated by children on a 1 to 5 (highest) likability scale, were evaluated most favorably Although there are greater than chance differences ($p < .01$) among them the magnitude is psychologically trivial. (Detailed numerical results are presented in section III of this report.)

Comprehension of material reflective of the series objectives was highest in pilots I and II as compared with pilot III. As will be noted subsequently in Figure 3 pilot III which was an entire drama focused on fewer objectives than did the other two pilots and used a more indirect approach. This evidently made the objectives less comprehensible to the students.

By contrast pilot III had the highest average factual comprehension of all three pilots followed by pilot I, with pilot II having lower factual comprehension than the other two.

FIGURE 1 QUESTION 1

Comparison of Pilots



In terms of which pilot the children would like to see more of pilot III was by far the preferred choice of the children. Twenty-two percent of the children had no preference from among the three pilots.

As will be seen later, pilot III was also the overwhelming choice of the teachers.

Recommendations: Because of the marked preference by students and teachers and the high likability and factual comprehension ratings, a dramatic format such as used in pilot III would have distinct advantages for the final series. The dramatic format, however, will have to be modified or augmented so as to achieve higher comprehension of specific objectives.

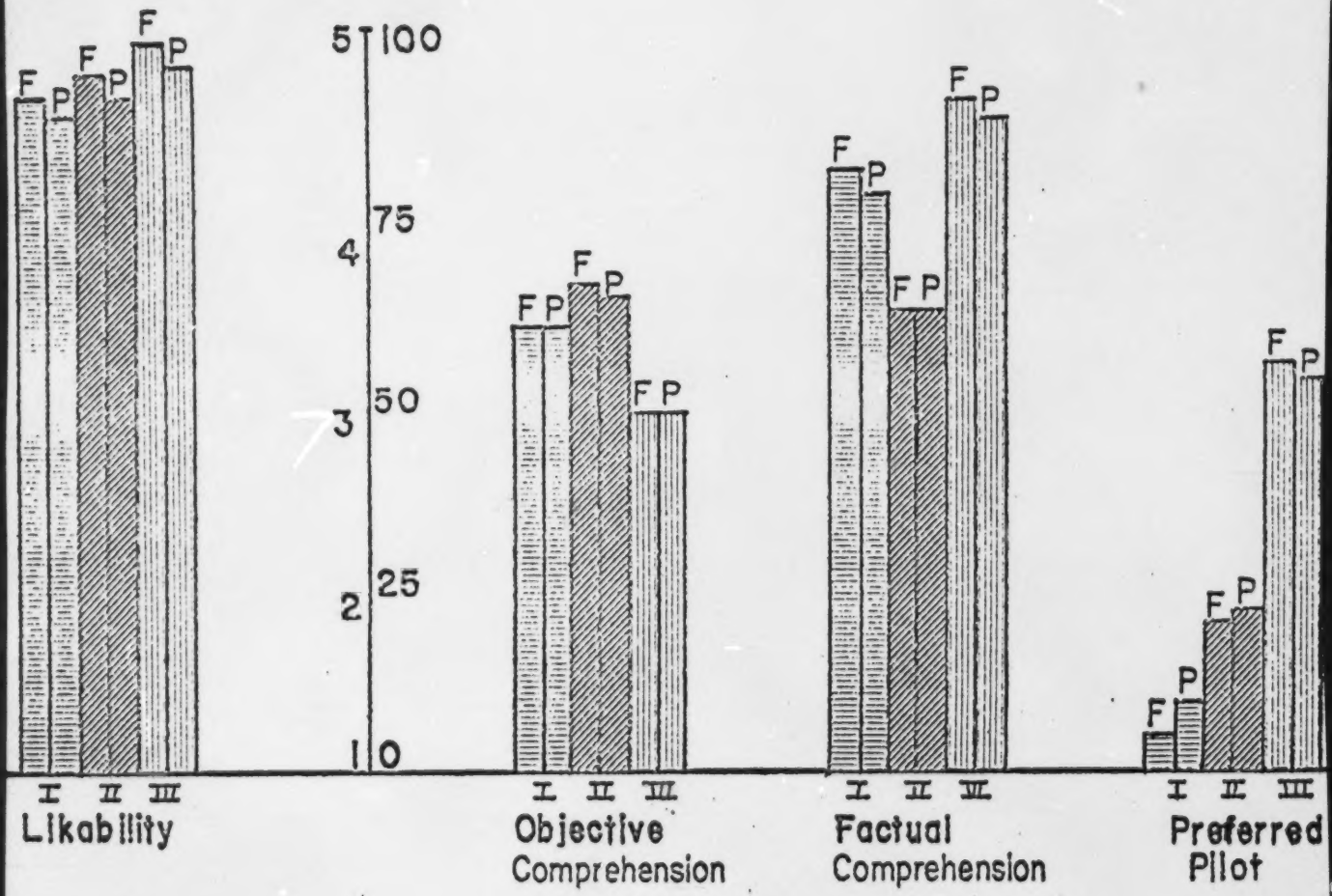
Nonbroadcast Materials

Figure 2 compares the averages for likability comprehension and preference measures originally summarized in Figure 1, but now compared by full and partial treatment conditions. These patterns have generality across sites, sex, age and ethnicity Hence again findings can be best summarized in a single figure.

The most striking finding in these comparisons are that on all measures on all pilots there are no major differences between full and partial treatments. This indicates that the addition of the Comic Book, the activities promoted by

FIGURE 2 QUESTION 2

Full vs. Partial Treatment



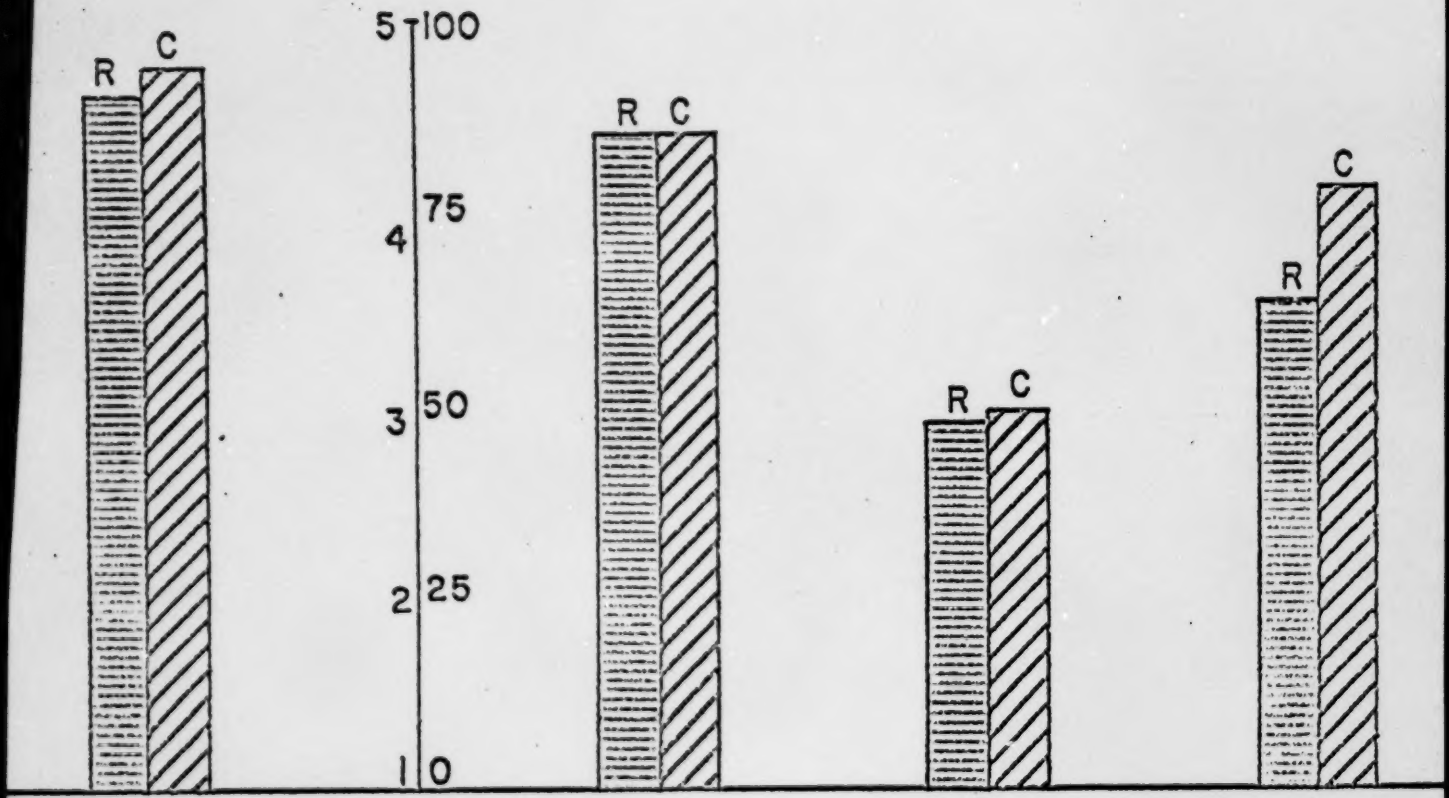
the School Guide, and in-service training of teachers failed to augment any of the effects of the television materials as gauged in terms of likability and comprehension of or preference for, the pilots This is a finding contrary to the usual expectations that complementary in-class activities will augment educational television effects.

One implication of these findings could be the decision to drop nonbroadcast materials and in-service training from the final series. However, it is felt that two factors provide an argument in favor of further experimentation with nonbroadcast materials. First, because of different production schedules, the present television and nonbroadcast materials do not closely parallel one another and thus, do not complement the series objectives as much as could be possible. Second, since the aggregate effect of seeing the entire series will be in part in the attitudinal domain and because classroom interaction could have desired effects upon attitudes further development and evaluation of the nonbroadcast materials seems in order.

Figure 2A summarizes the comparison of the realistic with cartoon versions of the Comic Book. Results show no greater than a chance difference between the two versions on measures of likability, readership or objective comprehension. Factual comprehension (based upon one question), did tend to favor the cartoon version. All measures indicate that the Comic Book was favorably received.

FIGURE 2A QUESTION 2

Comic Book



R = Realistic version
C = Cartoon version

Although detailed evaluation of the nonbroadcast materials is the subject of a subsequent report, it should be noted that teachers in bilingual (Spanish-English) classes in Texas and New Jersey were reticent to use the Spanish language versions of the Comic Book and School Guide, preferring the English versions instead.

Recommendations: Because of the findings of lack of effect, development of the nonbroadcast materials for the series should proceed with extra caution. The materials should be designed so as to augment more explicitly the series objectives or have separate objectives, or both. Also, development should be considered which emphasizes promotion of attitudinally related class discussions. Either the realistic or cartoon type comic book could be used with equal effectiveness. The summative research design should incorporate experimental comparisons of classes undergoing different uses of nonbroadcast materials. Consideration should be given to dropping Spanish language Comic Books. (There were insufficient data to suggest this for the Home Guide).

Comprehension of Individual Objectives

Comprehension scores reflecting students ability to identify the objectives in the television pilots are summarized in Figure 3. There are a number of factors that could contribute to the many variations seen in these

FIGURE 3 QUESTION 3
Objective Comprehension

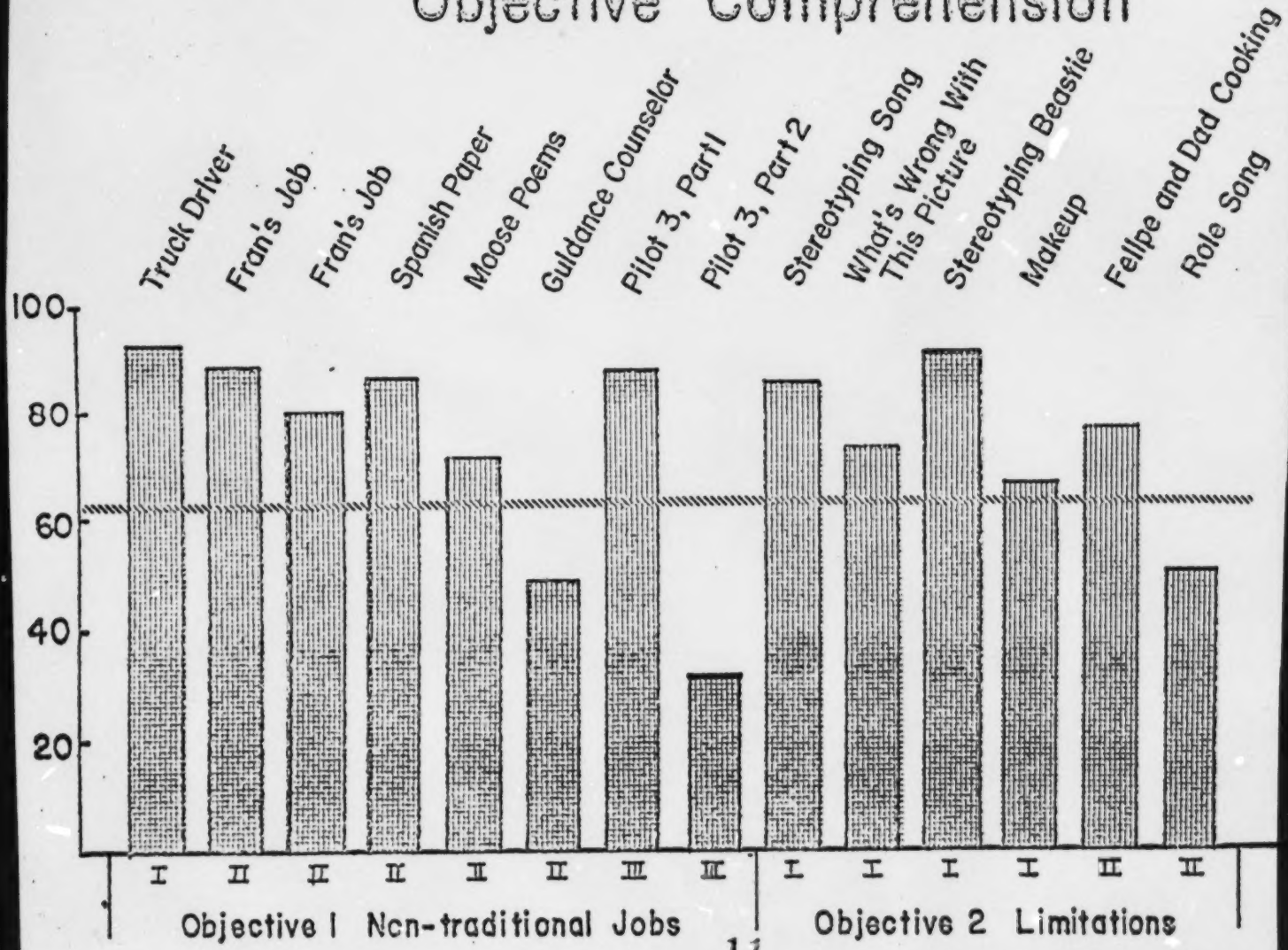
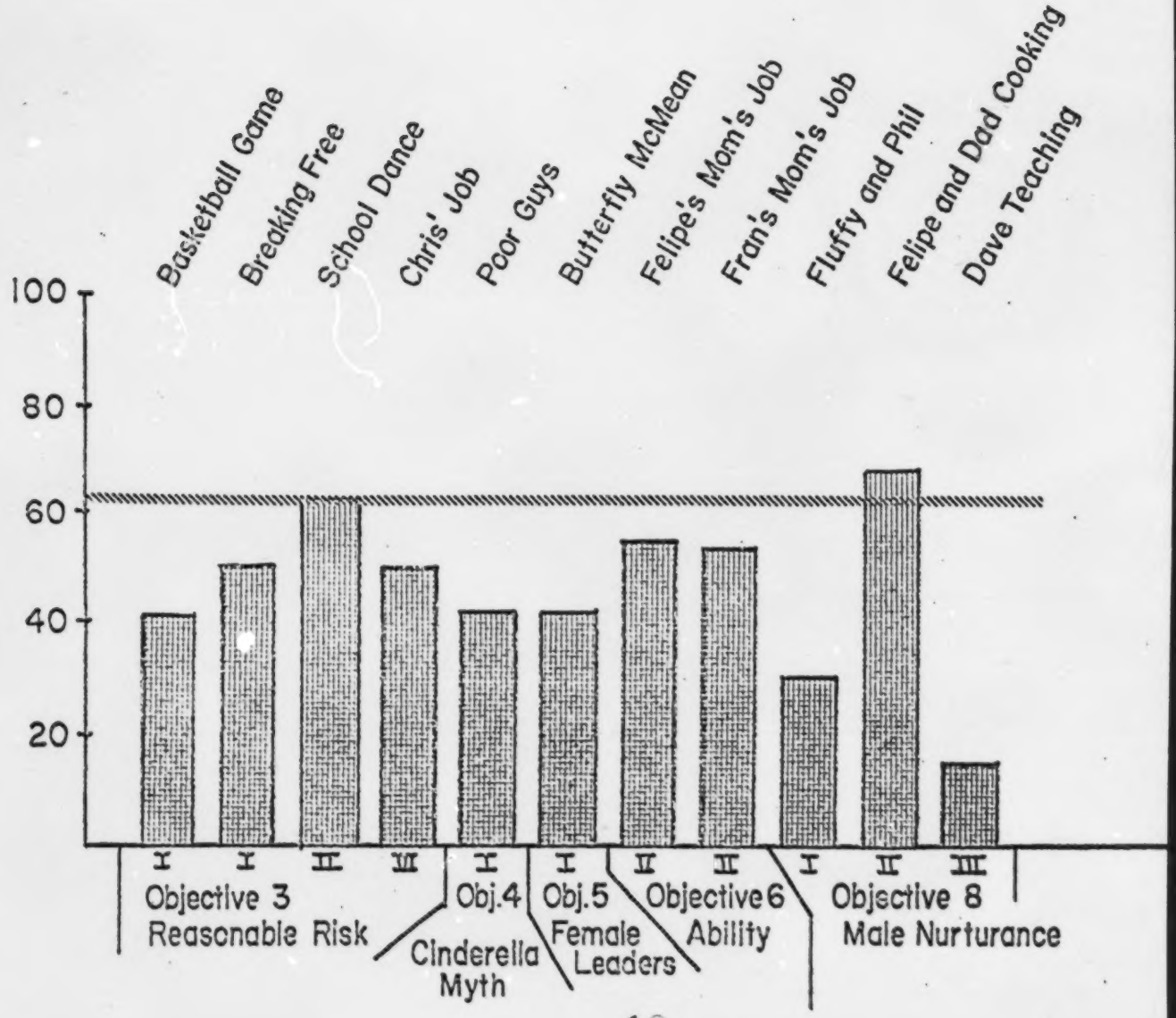


Figure 3 (cont'd)



results. Some variation could reflect the different media forms, such as film vs. cartoons; or it could reflect storyline, characters or overall presentation contexts. Some could reflect the degree to which the researchers failed to write questions which were not highly biased in ease or difficulty for a particular segment. However, to combat the latter problem questions on the instructional objectives were written in a generally standard format where the child was requested to select the correct objective from a list of distractors comprising other objectives of the project, or objectives which were the opposite of those objectives. Distractors were avoided which could be possibly associated with the segment even though the producers did not intend it as a principal objective. Given this attempt at a standard format and having pretested all of the questions for bias, it is quite likely that the differences among objectives as shown in Figure 3 reflect other factors than simply question differences.

The relatively lower comprehension for pilot III objectives, with the exception of one segment, is one pattern in the comparison of objectives. Another pattern which manifests itself to some degree is that with the exception of the "Stereotyping Song" musical numbers did not lead to particularly high objective comprehension scores. (This is corroborated by interview material which often indicated that student and teachers could not follow

the words to the songs). There are also a number of low comprehension scores for cartoons, which ironically in earlier pilot work, as well as in interview data in the national study, were often commented on most favorably in terms of likability.

On a more subjective level, particularly when one examines the nature of each objective, and the segments relative to the development of questions for each, some segments are markedly more explicit than others. Those which are explicit seem consistently to have the highest objective comprehension scores. Of course some of the objectives may lend themselves to a more explicit portrayal than others. This appears to be the case for "non-traditional roles," and to some extent, in limitations of stereotypes, both say, as compared with "female leadership," the "Cinderella myth," or "male nurturance."

Recommendations: Explicitness in the portrayal of an objective, rather than the length of a segment or the production technique, seems to be the determining factor in the degree to which comprehension is achieved. Songs and musical numbers seem hard for the children to follow, at least for getting the explicit message. If a dramatic context similar to pilot III which the children and teachers preferred is to be used for the final series, then strategies must be undertaken to make the objectives more explicit. Objectives should be written so as to lend

themselves to explicit portrayal. Production personnel should strive for explicitness in the eventual media portrayal.

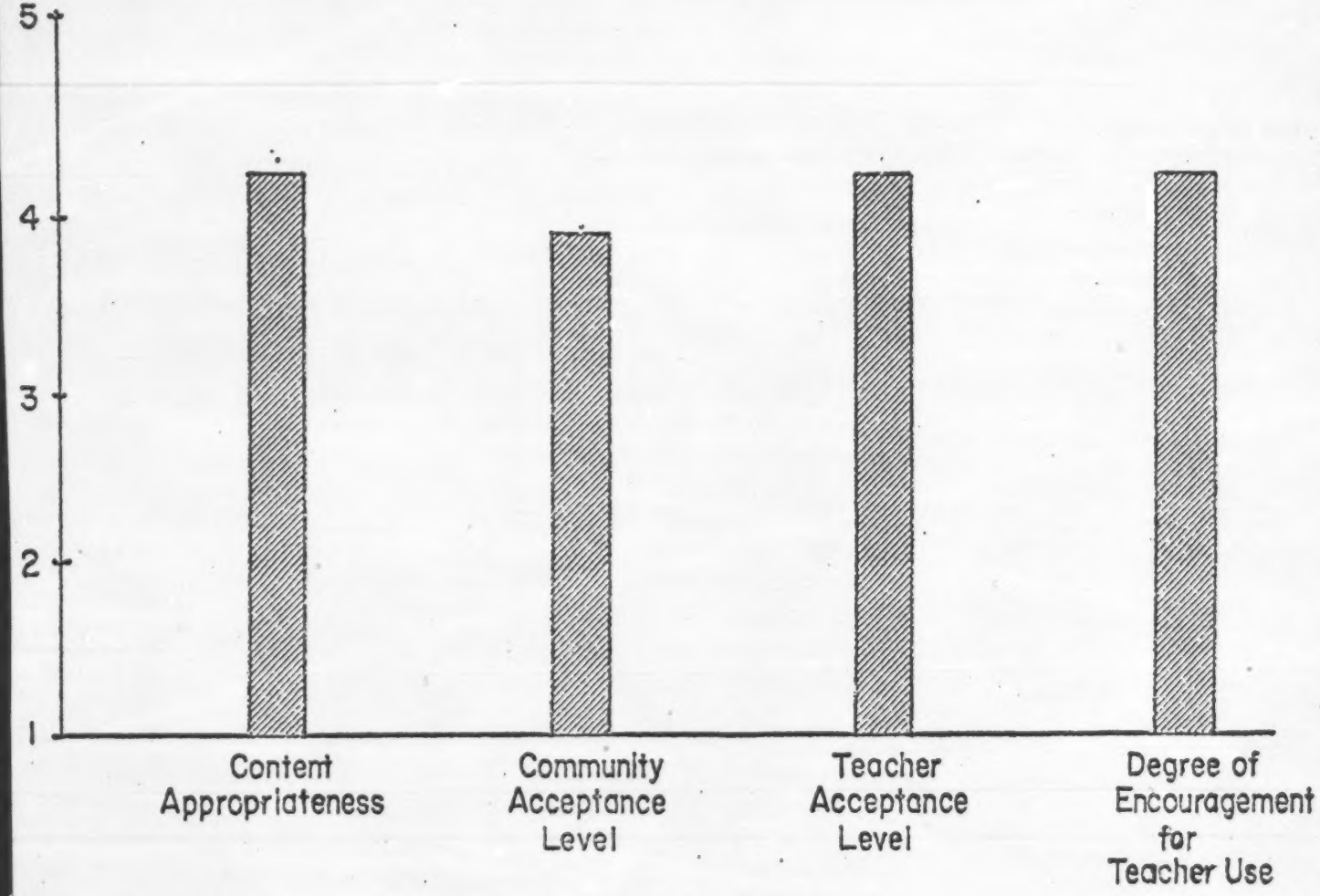
In retrospect, the initial set of objectives was probably insufficiently explicit and the production staff perhaps did not keep objectives clearly enough in mind, especially when producing dramatic segments. That a child "gets the point" is especially important if it is assumed that objectives such as found in the pilot materials are only the precursor to attitudinal and behavioral change objectives.

Utilization

Referring to Figure 4A, although the number of administrator respondents was only 11, the average ratings of "content appropriateness," "community acceptance," "anticipated teacher acceptance," and "encouragement for teacher use" were 3.9 or higher on a 1 to 5 scale, where 5 was the most desirable rating.

As shown in Figure 4B, teachers' ratings of "content appropriateness" averaged 4.1 or higher across all four sites. Recommendation for series use was also high on the average at all sites. As mentioned earlier teachers showed a marked preference for Pilot III.

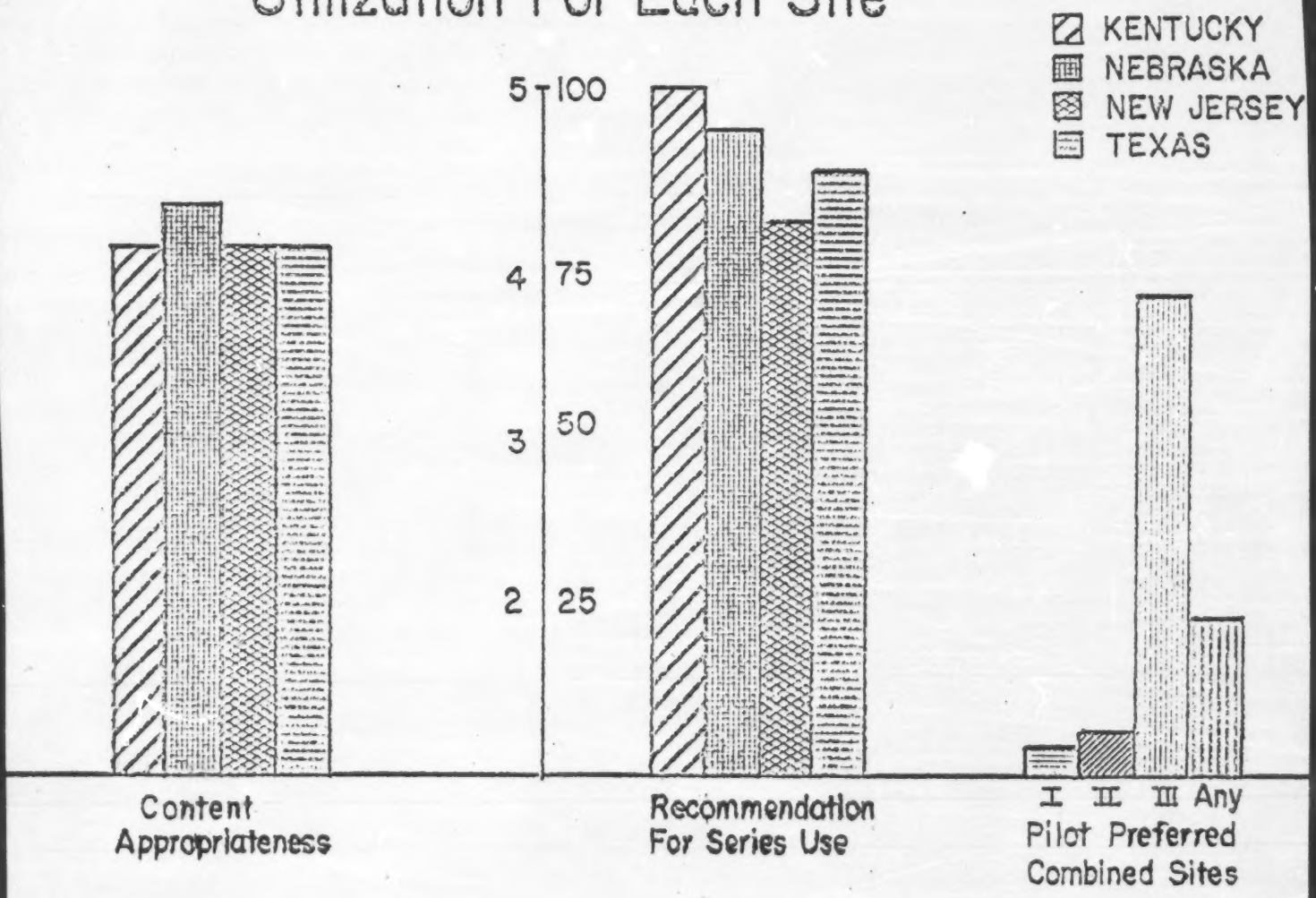
FIGURE 4A QUESTION 4
Administrator Mean Reactions To Package Utilization *



* N=11

FIGURE 4B QUESTION 4

Teacher Reactions To Package Utilization For Each Site



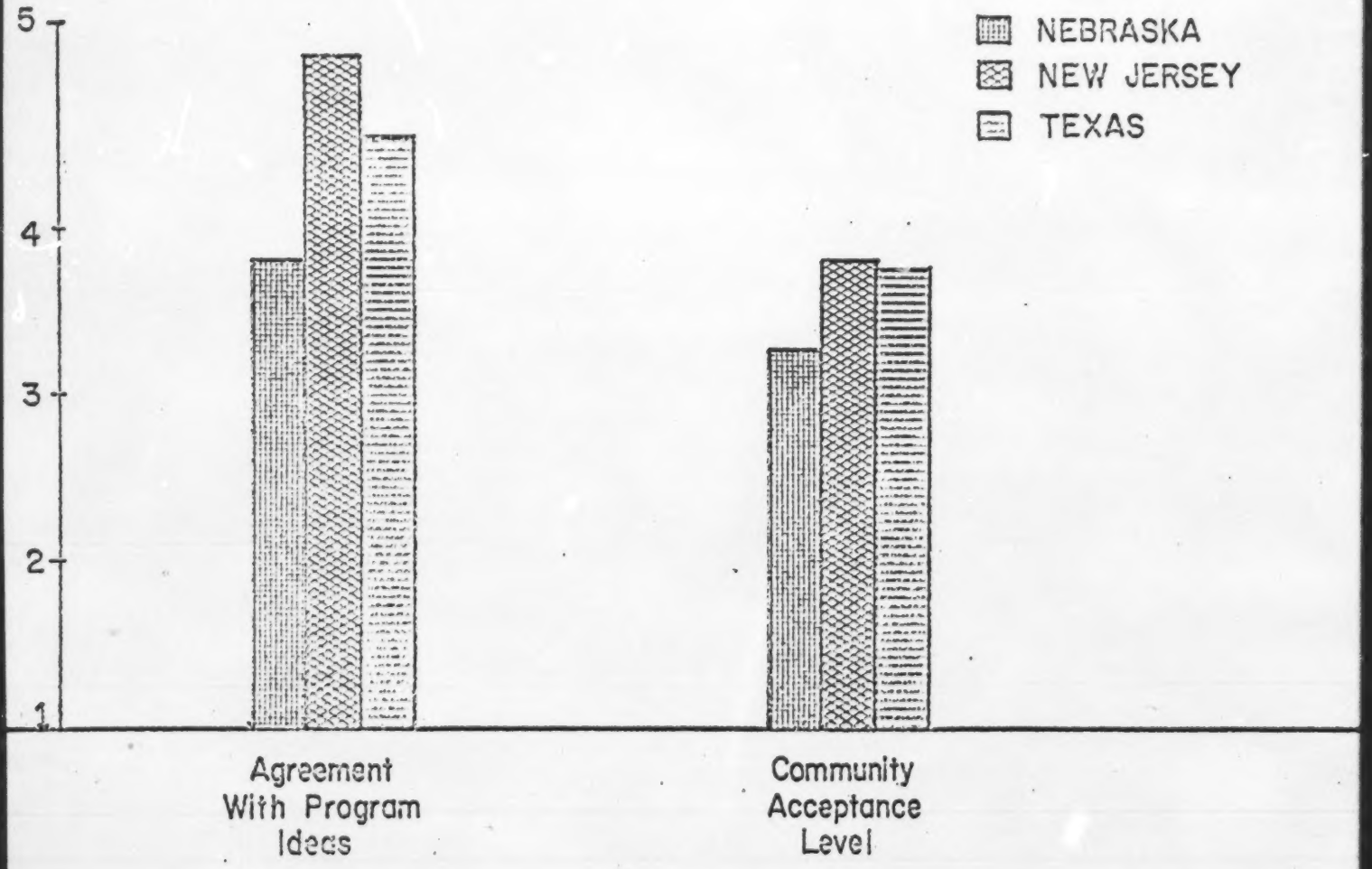
In comments on questionnaires as well in some interviews, the point was made by both teachers and administrators that although they liked the series there would be serious problems in gaining time in the already crowded curriculum, especially the ETV curriculum, for its actual use. The more that the series could be infused into the existing curricula, the better chance it would have for utilization.

When there were content-oriented objections to the series, these were usually tied to a disagreement with the project goals, a judgment that the series was too old for the children, or both. However, these were expressed only by a very small minority of teachers or adminstrators.

Referring to Figure 4C, data from parents were admittedly more difficult to obtain since in most cases the researchers had to obtain volunteer viewers For what they are worth, however the data summarized in this figure indicate largely favorable responses to agreement with the program goals," as well as "likely acceptance by the community."

FIGURE 4C QUESTION 4

Parent Reactions To Package Utilization For Each Site*



* Kentucky had none reporting